



After nearly 30 years, Bechtel bids farewell to it's illustrious leader John Pearson

John Pearson, Director of the Bechtel International Center, is due to retire in June of this year. He has been a great asset to Stanford and CCIS. Leading with grace and passion, he has impacted the field of international education on a global scale. Often jokingly referred to as the "University's favorite Brit", John will be sorely missed by colleagues and students alike.

John's interest in US history and culture began at an early age, sparked by the sounds of the blues and American rock n roll. In 1969, he landed in Tennessee, where he would begin his career in international education. He took a position at the University of Tennessee, working with study abroad and scholarship while coaching men's soccer on the side. In 1985 he made the move west to Stanford as the Assistant Director of the Overseas Research Center (ORC). In 1988 when former Director Lee Ziegler retired, John took command of the I-Center.

Looking back at John's long career, we see numerous accolades, such as the Homer Higbee award from NAFSA and Stanford Student Affairs' Fidler award. Much praise is given for his knowledge of the industry, ability to see the big picture when considering complicated immigration regulations, and leadership roles within NAFSA and the University. However, it is his dedication to supporting individuals which sets him apart from most leaders. John continues to meet with students, counseling them on complicated immigration issues and supporting them with applications for coveted scholarships. He makes time for junior staff members as well, providing advice, support and mentoring. His enduring commitment to improving the experience of International students during their time at Stanford is clear in all that he does.

His tenure has not been without challenges. Although not completely unaffected, the office managed to weather the 2008 recession fairly well. This was in part due to the way in which the International Center responded to the challenges post 9-11. With federal regulations becoming exponentially more complicated after 2008, working in international education became akin to being a paralegal. Bechtel was able to provide increased immigration and regulatory support, while maintaining social programs, lunchtime talks, field trips, and a spouse program. The

inaugural staff of the old Foreign Students Office would be proud to see the Bechtel International Center of today. While it remains essential to assist International students with the bureaucratic nature of study in another country, staff and former directors have always acknowledged the importance of supporting the students' entire experience. Bechtel, under John Pearson's graceful leadership has been able to continue that tradition. The Bechtel International Center is revered and admired by Universities nationwide and globally. Stanford offers an amazing experience for all its students, but International students at Stanford receive support second to none.



We asked John to reflect on his time at Stanford and his work with CCIS. He said he feels incredibly lucky to have had CCIS by his side all these years, and admits that Bechtel would really struggle to provide all of the services they offer without having CCIS providing valuable programs such as Homestay and English-in-Action. One of his favorite memories was of the Bechtel/CCIS Anniversary Events in 2003. All previous Bechtel directors: Warner Warmbrunn, Ken Cooper & Lee Zeigler were brought together, along with CCIS past presidents, and Dick Lyman, former Stanford University President.

John would like to extend a special thank you to Gwyn Dukes. John has had the pleasure to work with Gwyn for a number of years both as a member of staff, and as a CCIS volunteer. Gwyn has made a significant contribution to the Stanford International Community through the creation of the Spouse Education Fund, and her thousands of hours of support provided to International families. Retirement will not end John's dedication to this mission. He will maintain his membership within CCIS; looking for new ways to support International students, scholars and families. John's wish for CCIS is that it continues to maintain its vibrancy, by creating new programs, and attracting the next generation of active volunteers. He looks forward to exploring the many libraries on campus, and may even take a continuing studies class or two. With John's son Jack heading off to college in the fall as well, he's sure to have some free time! We're pretty sure we can find something to keep him busy!

Communiqué Presents the Gratitude Column

Members of CCIS volunteering their time, talent and efforts to the various committees and programs often share stories and accounts of the rewards and benefits of their involvement in these programs. CCIS contributes so much for the International students who take advantage of the various programs offered them. We would like to share some testimonies from a few of our volunteers in this issue and then continue with some from International students in the next issue. Gratitude validates the rewards both students and volunteers receive.

Roy Hyrkin, EIA volunteer: “My thanks to all of the generous folks who have organized the EIA program. My partner is a young man from Tokyo who is researching the US energy markets. At our weekly meeting we discuss a wide range of topics from baseball to climate change. I find that offering friendship in this way has had a wonderful effect on my life. Thank you CCIS for this opportunity.”

Phil Berghausen, Homestay volunteer: “My Home stay student is bright, very thoughtful and appreciative. I enjoyed functioning in a quasi-parental role as I helped him set up bank accounts, buy a bicycle, and furnish his apartment. I had fun showing off many tourist sites in SF and being reminded, in the process, of what is so good about living in the Bay Area.”

Hope Kang, EIA volunteer: “This is my 4th year in EIA, I’ve had four different EIA partners: two from South Korea, one from Ukraine, and one from Russia. I’ve had fun learning different cultures from each one. Often I will invite them over to my home to do cooking demonstrations. Each one showed me their favorite traditional food to cook and vice versa. I very much appreciate this opportunity to work with Internationals. I give so little to them but what I get back is priceless! “

Young French Innovators win prize visit to SF Bay Area and Silicon Valley

Schoolmates Maryne and Isaline won the prize in a national science competition in their native France that encouraged high school students to creatively use science to try and improve the world in new ways. Their project affording them the win was the development of a pair of eyeglasses that incorporates a computer design using GPS to aid the blind in sensing obstructions in their path and thereby allowing them to navigate without relying on someone else. The impetus for this project came from Isaline who wanted to do something for her grandfather who had become blind.

They were awarded a trip to the San Francisco Bay Area and Silicon Valley for sightseeing, meeting with technology companies for tours and interviews, as well as visiting an American high school to compare differences and similarities to theirs in France. They presented their innovation numerous times at prestigious places such as Facebook, Cisco, Google X, Stanford University, UC Berkeley and many others. Some reactions of these companies were that Maryne and Isaline’s innovation was “amazing, so great, we’re so impressed.” The Girls were accompanied by a State Department Representative and the Editor-in-Chief of Phosphore, a French magazine for high school students. The French journalist wrote an editorial and article in Phosphore entitled THE VALLEY THAT INVENTS TOMORROW and describes how Facebook, Google, Cisco and Xerox opened their doors to them and of their “journey to the heart of Silicon Valley...inside the reactor of the world.” The journalist also writes that what strikes the students first is the enthusiastic communication of Americans. The students came out of these various meetings with starry eyes and an idea of what might be possible for them. One of the students quipped that she might come to love the stamina of working at Google. The article also contrasts the approach to innovation in France versus the approach in Silicon Valley where dreams become a reality. Maryne and Isaline were hosted by Ian and Val Mallace and their neighbors, Stanley and Christy Czarnecki. Many interesting and enlightening discussions about American culture were enjoyed by all, including the hosts’ experience of living and working in Silicon Valley and comparisons with that of France. As it was Halloween time, Maryne and Isaline experienced the fun of the holiday with visits to decorated homes in Palo Alto, pumpkin carving at the Czarnecki home, plus treats and festivities.



Karen Sortino, CCIS Indentured American Ambassador.



Karen Sortino has been a member of CCIS since the 1960's and has served as co-president of CCIS. For the past 17 years Karen has been teaching the US Customs and Institutions class. We would venture to say that many of her students and friends do not know that she is a "logophile." ; Google's definition being a person who loves words. One might go so far as to say that she is a "idiomophile", a concocted word, but one that seems appropriate in her case.

This quarter Karen discussed the words anorexia, overwhelm and jovial as they came up in class discussion. She also addressed idioms such as "my neck of the woods", "cream of the crop", and "top dog." She derives great satisfaction from her students learning how to use new words and expressions.

Karen's background is as follows: She graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a B.A. in Journalism and from Case Western Reserve with an M.A. in Education. Later, she earned a second Masters in Counseling from San Jose State University. Her career includes serving as an administrative assistant in the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Department at Stanford, working at the Alzheimer's Association and teaching at de Anza College in Volunteer Administration.

A model active American senior is a good description of this feisty woman. She plays bridge, scrabble and mahjong, as well as being a member of two book clubs. She also plays piano, golfs and hikes twice a week. Her current favorite pastime is walking her new Australian labradoodle, Rusty.

When asked to comment on her teaching at Bechtel, Karen said she sees herself as a kind of an American ambassador sharing the best of American culture and fostering peace. In addition to great personal satisfaction, she lists her paybacks as a file full of exotic recipes, lots of travel tips and numerous letters of gratitude from her students thanking her for her entertaining and enriching classes and her hospitality at the year end potluck she hosts at her home. Many thanks to Karen for her enduring dedication to CCIS!

In memory of Mary Bulf, By Gwyn Dukes

At age 90, long-time volunteer Mary Bulf called the I-Center to invite some International students for Thanksgiving. This was typical of Mary, a retired teacher at Los Lomitas elementary school who took great joy in her friendships



with Stanford's International community. For 27 years Mary was an English in Action partner, always curious to learn about other countries and help others understand the local culture. She kept in touch with many of her partners, and one of the highlights of her life was a trip to Japan with her husband, Gene, during which they visited and were hosted by several of their former EIA partners. "We were treated like royalty!" she reported.

Mary was also a "Desk Volunteer" in the years when a CCIS volunteer staffed a desk in the front lobby of the I-Center. She was well suited to this assignment, and enjoyed greeting students, practicing conversation with many, and answering questions about English in Action and other CCIS programs. She loved being in "the flow" of students, and offered animated conversation to those who stopped by with a question or problem.

Mary and her husband, Gene, were Environmental Volunteers, and for many years they led a Wildflower Walk on Jasper Ridge (Stanford's Biological Laboratory) every spring as part of the Wednesday Tours for international spouses. Mary and Gene were also frequent attendees at the Pot Luck Music Nights and other I-Center and CCIS events. Mary Bulf passed away on February 19, at the age of 92. A celebration of Mary's life was held on April 9th. at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Palo Alto.

CCIS **Leadership**

President's column

Karen McNay

Another exciting year for CCIS is quickly coming to a close. It was terrific to see so many of you at our 63rd Annual Meeting on May 9th. Following the election of officers and board members for next year Phil Berghausen spoke of his many years as a volunteer for EIA, Homestay and Hospitality, sharing some of his entertaining experiences. Kadri Koop, from Estonia, a MFA candidate in documentary film shared some of her experiences as a Homestay student and how grateful she is to have had CCIS in her life. John Pearson, Director of Bechtel was our keynote speaker. Always engaging, John spoke of the many changes he has experienced over his almost 30 years at Bechtel and the importance of the relationship between CCIS and the Bechtel staff. John is retiring this June and will be missed tremendously!! A couple of notes as we close out this year and look forward to 2016-2017. Membership renewal forms will be mailed out early summer. Please be sure to update all your information and interests and return them at your earliest convenience. Donna Shoemaker is always happy to answer any questions.

Once again, we anticipate a very busy Fall for 2016, particularly the month of September. Volunteers are always welcomed for Homestay, Hospitality, Community Advisors, the Loan Closet and English in Action. We will continue with English classes, Friday Morning Coffee, many social Events, the Spouse Education Fund and Professional Liaison programs. These programs are a great opportunity for younger family members or friends to be introduced to other cultures so please share our information with your friends, co-workers, school PTA's or neighbors who might be interested. None of these programs would be the tremendous success they are without the support and time from all of you. Many thanks and I look forward to seeing you as we begin our 64th year of CCIS!

Editor's column

Michelle Laker, Amanda Preece & Karin Meiswinkel

Change is the motivator of progress: A change is currently taking place in the editorial staff of the Communiqué. Michelle Laker who has served as co-editor for the technical sector, and so much more over the past year, is resigning from this position. The good news is that Michelle is not leaving CCIS, but is changing roles and in keeping with the times, is building and promoting a Facebook page for CCIS! This will serve as an excellent venue to reach out to the students, scholars and families involved with CCIS and provide yet another facet for communication, information and exchanges in a multitude of areas. We also look to it as a good means of encouraging and recruiting new volunteers, whom are the integral part of what constitutes the success of CCIS. The new page will be an easily accessible tool to connect with the community and invite them to learn about and become involved with CCIS. As Michelle is changing hats, we are extremely pleased to introduce her replacement, Amanda Preece, from Calgary Canada. Amanda has over 10 years experience with the InDesign program which is used for the publication of the quarterly Communiqué newsletter. She also has a background in journalism and marketing and is looking forward to working with everyone and contributing her talents to CCIS. Karin Meiswinkel will continue as the creative writer, interviewer, photographer and so forth. That part hasn't "changed." So submitting your stories, experiences, photos and just anything you would like to share with the CCIS community is extremely welcome as always.



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ccis Communiqué

Volume 20, Number 4

Spring 2016

Published by the CCIS

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John Pearson



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Dear CCIS Friends,
It is with very mixed feelings that I am writing my last column for the Communiqué. I will be retiring at the end of June from serving as Director of Bechtel International Center. While I am excited about what the next life adventure may provide, I find it difficult to express how much I have enjoyed, valued and treasured my interactions with CCIS—both as an organization and with all the many individual members. Upon first arriving at Bechtel in 1985 I have a vivid memory of thinking how remarkable it was to have such an impressive, energetic and devoted volunteer organization. My feelings have only intensified over the years. You are all so special in the way you support international students, scholars, and family members. The entire image of Bechtel would pale in comparison without your care and devotion. I cannot thank you enough for being such good friends to me over the years. I will not forget it and I look forward to following the continuing adventures of this most wonderful organization. With all my very best wishes,
John Pearson

2015/16 CALENDAR

June 1st - 5-7pm, Picnic on the Oval, Stanford
June 11th - 9:30am, Commencement at Stanford Stadium

Pi/Pie Night

On Friday, March 11th, the CCIS Events Committee sponsored a potluck dinner from 6-8 PM, featuring sweet and savory pies from around the world in honor of Pi Day (3/14) and the end of the quarter. In attendance were a mix of CCIS members and international grad students, post-docs and visiting scholars, including family members of all ages. The free event included a contest for best pie (cobblers and crisps ruled the day) and relay races with prizes. The races, featuring balancing lemons on spoons and running with balloons between the knees, were great fun and served as good ice-breakers for making new friends or just getting to know language partners better. Among the contest judges were various CCIS members and cooking instructors. The decorations were hand painted "pies" and pizza boxes created by members of the international spouse community. CCIS members and internationals alike pitched in to make this a warm and inviting evening for one and all.



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